

## Obituary.

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### SAMUEL WALKER MCGOWAN.

Mr. McGowan was born on the 4th of January, 1829, at Kingston, Ontario, Canada, where he received his early education. He studied for the legal profession for four years at Toronto, until the death of his father in 1847. He then attended lectures on natural science, and learnt the Morse system of telegraphy under its inventor, Professor Morse, from whom he received high testimonials. He then served successively in the Toronto and Buffalo Electro-magnetic Telegraph Company, the Montreal Telegraph Company, and the New York, Albany, and Buffalo Telegraph Company until 1852, when, upon the advice of Professor Morse, he came to Melbourne, where he landed early in 1853. He brought with him materials and instruments for establishing a telegraph company; but the Government having decided to assume the management of the local telegraphs, he tendered for their construction; his offer was accepted, and the work was so satisfactorily performed, that he was appointed to the charge of the Telegraph Department, which he retained till his death, on the 18th April, 1887. He was also Deputy Postmaster General since the amalgamation of the Post and the Telegraph Departments in 1885. In 1886 he received twelve months' leave of absence on full pay, with the view of obtaining all the latest information in Europe and America respecting telegraphs and telephones. He returned to Melbourne in April 1887, with abundant materials for a voluminous report. He had suffered at the commencement of his return voyage from an attack of congestion of the lungs. Upon his arrival, however, he felt well enough to resume duty, but served one day only, when he had a relapse, and rapidly became so much worse, that he had an operation performed on the morning of the 18th of April, and died about 9 o'clock the same evening.

He was an able, energetic, and conscientious public officer. Besides organising and managing from the commencement the whole telegraph service of Victoria for 34 years, he also acted as Captain of the Torpedo Corps, and served on the Council of the Royal Society at various times since 1862, where his valuable assistance and counsel were highly appreciated. Here his loss was felt more than in the country at large, for many of his colleagues were privileged to be his intimate friends.

## EDMUND SAMUEL PARKES.

Mr. Parkes, though for many years a member of the Royal Society, was too entirely devoted to the claims of his profession to admit of his taking an active part in its proceedings, further than by occasional attendance at the Council's Conversaciones; he was, however, known and respected by many members of the Society and of its Council.

He began his business life in the office of a leading firm of London shipbrokers. From that he passed into the London and Westminster Bank, where he acquired the experience and knowledge which he applied to such good purpose in his subsequent career. He afterwards joined the Alliance Bank of London, as Manager, and on leaving it he received a flattering testimony of the estimation in which his services were held. In 1867 he accepted the appointment of Inspector in the Bank of Australasia in Melbourne, where he became General Inspector in 1871, and Superintendent in 1876. He enjoyed the highest reputation as a banker among bankers. He was unfortunately killed in the railway collision which occurred on the 11th of May, at Chapel Street, Windsor, being so severely injured that he only survived about three hours. He was fifty-three years of age. He had lost his wife within the year preceding, and left a numerous family.

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SIR JULIUS HAAST, K.C.M.G., F.R.S., D. Sc. Camb.

Julius Haast, who was a Member of the Academy of Sciences, Paris, &c., and Honorary Member of the Royal Society of Victoria, was born at Bonn on the 1st of May, 1824. He emigrated to Auckland, N.Z., in December 1858, where his scientific career as Government Geologist included important researches in geology, geography, zoology, botany, and meteorology, records of which are preserved in the scientific journals of New Zealand. In 1886 he proceeded to Europe as Commissioner for New Zealand at the Indian and Colonial Exhibition, and afterwards visited most of the principal cities of Europe, obtaining thence valuable contributions for the Canterbury Museum. His lamented death took place unexpectedly on the 16th of August, 1887, at Christchurch.

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SOLOMON IFFLA, L.R.C.P. Glasgow.

Dr. Iffla was born in Jamaica in 1821, but was for some years at Philadelphia, U.S.A., before going to Scotland, where he

received his medical education, graduating at Glasgow in 1844. He soon afterwards came to Australia, and settled first in Adelaide, where he practised his profession for a short time. He then came to Melbourne, where he established himself first in Stephen Street, and then in Collins Street, and was for several years known as a successful practitioner and magistrate. He was one of those who met at the Mechanics Institute on the 17th June, 1854, and founded the Philosophical Society of Victoria, in which he served in various years as member of Council, Treasurer, and Vice-President. In the end of 1861 he left town and settled at Wood's Point, where he was appointed Coroner, Registrar, and Public Vaccinator, and followed professional pursuits also. When the glory of Wood's Point waned, Dr. Iffla returned to Melbourne, and became a citizen of South Melbourne, where he not only enjoyed a good practice, but took an active part in municipal, magisterial, and political affairs, and was mayor of the city when the new Town Hall was opened by His Excellency the Marquis of Normanby, in 1881. He was also an official visitor of the Yarra Bend and Sunbury Lunatic Asylums. He had travelled a good deal, and his extensive information, genial manners, and instructive conversation contributed to secure for him the high esteem of a large circle of friends. He had been for some time in delicate health, and took a trip to Queensland to recruit it. Shortly after his return, however, he had an attack of congestion of the liver, which unfortunately terminated fatally on the 14th of September, 1887.

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BALFOUR STEWART, F.R.S.

In common with the scientific world at large, our Society has to lament the loss of Professor Balfour Stewart, F.R.S., on the 22nd December, 1887. It is long since he was a member of the Royal Society of Victoria, but it is pleasing to note the fact that he was an original member of both the Victorian Institute and the Philosophical Society of Victoria in 1854, which bodies were combined in 1855, under the name of the Philosophical Institute of Victoria, which, in 1859, received the Royal permission to take the title of the Royal Society of Victoria. The second paper read before the Philosophical Society of Victoria was by Mr. Stewart, on the 10th September, 1854, "On Certain Laws Observable in the Mutual Action of Sulphuric Acid and Water." Of this only an abstract was published. Two other papers of his appear in the first volume of its Transactions for the same year, one "On the Influence of Gravity on the Physical Condition of the Moon's

Surface," and the other "On the Adaptation of the Eye to the Nature of the Rays which Emanate from Bodies." The Society soon after lost his services, as he returned to England to enter upon his subsequent brilliant scientific career, the leading achievements of which are epitomised by Prof. P. G. Tait in "Nature" for the 29th December last. Some twenty years before his death he was severely injured in a railway accident, from the effects of which he never completely recovered. Professor Tait knew him better, it is presumed, than any one in Australia, and he concludes his notice thus :—"Of the man himself I cannot trust myself to speak. What I could say will easily be divined by those who knew him intimately, and to those who did not know him, I am unwilling to speak in terms which, to them, must certainly appear exaggerated."

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